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RUEHRC/DEPT OF AGRICULTURE WASHDC  
RUCPDO/DEPT OF COMMERCE WASHDC  
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RUEAUSA/DEPT OF HHS WASHINGTON DC  
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RUEHC/DEPT OF INTERIOR WASHDC  
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STATE FOR OES/PCI, OES/STC, OES/SAT, OES/EGC, AND SCA/INS  
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TAGS: [SENV](#) [TSPL](#) [TBIO](#) [KSCA](#) [TRGY](#) [IN](#)

SUBJECT: NEW DELHI EST OFFICE HIGHLIGHTS FOR THE WEEKS OF APRIL 6 TO  
APRIL 17, 2009.

REF: UNVIE 0155

11. (U) Below is a compilation of environment, science, and  
technology highlights from Embassy New Delhi for the weeks of April  
06-17, 2009, including the following:

- New Protocols for Tiger Relocations in National Parks
- Poll Indicates Political Parties Unconcerned About the  
Environment
- TERI to Study Impact of Climate Change on Himalayan Glaciers
- GOI Plans to Add New Biotechnology Regulatory Structure
- Russia offers India Investment Opportunity in International  
Uranium Enrichment Center
- BrahMos Missile to Become Hypersonic
- Treating Brain Tumors with a Nanoparticle-Based Drug Delivery  
System

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ENVIRONMENT  
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New Protocols for Tiger Relocations in National Parks

12. (SBU) The Ministry of Environment and Forest's National Tiger  
Conservation Authority (NTCA) is preparing detailed protocols for  
tiger relocations, and has told the media that until they are  
published, there will be no further tiger relocations between parks.  
The decision came in response to a March 2009 letter to the Prime  
Minister's office by wildlife experts alleging that the Madhya  
Pradesh forest department overlooked basic norms while shifting two  
female tigers from Bandhavgarh National Park to Panna National Park  
(PNP). PNP is notorious for inept management and a failure to curb  
wildlife poaching which has led to what could be a complete loss of  
its tiger population. Despite the publicly reported nationwide NTCA

mandate prohibiting relocations, EST section contact and prominent wildlife lawyer Sudhir Mishra suspects the protocol is being prepared specifically for PNP and will not be a standard guideline for all tiger relocations in India. Mishra noted that forests are managed by states and state governments cannot be forced to follow central government protocols. Speaking from past experience, Mishra said that state governments from the same party as the central government will be inclined to follow the protocols while those that are not will move forward with their relocation plans regardless.

#### Poll Indicates Political Parties Unconcerned About the Environment

13. (U) The Times of India recently analyzed the environmental performance of the two main coalition parties in India, the United Progressive Alliance and the National Democratic Alliance, and found that neither grouping followed existing environmental regulations and both sought out workarounds in order to benefit their constituencies. In a ten-city survey, forty-three percent of the respondents believed that as a nation, India was not doing enough to address environmental concerns. Respondents listed deforestation, species extinction and pollution as their three foremost environment concerns. Eighty-one percent of the respondents believed that politicians colluded with the timber mafia and poachers, and were thoroughly uninformed about the extent of environmental damage in India. Sixty-three percent of respondents felt strict administration and policing would help tackle problems of deforestation, pollution, and poaching.

#### TERI to Study Impact of Climate Change on Himalayan Glaciers

14. (U) The Energy and Resources Institute (TERI) began a scientific  
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study to assess the impact of global warming on receding Himalayan glaciers. The study is being led by EST section contact and glaciologist Dr. Syed Iqbal Hasnain who noted research will be done in collaboration with local universities and academic institutes and focus initially on the states of Jammu and Kashmir, Himachal Pradesh and Sikkim. The study will later expand its scope to the remaining states making up the Indian Himalayan region. TERI signed an MoU with the Indian Mountaineering Foundation to train its scientists in basic and advanced mountaineering skills in preparation for the study.

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SCIENCE  
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#### GOI Plans to Add New Biotechnology Regulatory Structure

15. (U) A contact within the Ministry of Science and Technology's (MoST) Department of Biotechnology (DBT) informed the EST section the Government of India was planning to implement regulations for developing gene-based therapies and drugs or vaccines derived from natural sources such as humans, animals, and microorganisms. The biotechnology regulation landscape in India currently suffers from a haphazard array of competing government organizations, particularly the DBT and Ministry of Health (MOH), that have claimed authority over segments of the industry but failed to publish formal guidelines or coordinate them with other agencies. The MoST's proposed National Biotechnology Regulatory Authority (NBRA) bill, originally intended to be introduced in the February parliament session but now delayed until after the Indian parliamentary elections, seeks to create a single-window biotechnology regulatory agency. The bill has strong support from Rajya Sabha (upper house of parliament) member and eminent scientist Dr. MS Swaminathan and most commentators believe it is likely to pass.

#### Russia offers India Investment Opportunity in International Uranium Enrichment Center

16. (U) During a recent visit to Moscow, Russia presented a visiting Indian nuclear delegation comprised of Department of Atomic Energy (DAE) Chairman Anil Kakodkar, Nuclear Power Corporation of India Limited (NPCIL) Chairman and Managing Director SK Jain, and Uranium Corporation of India Chief R Gupta, an offer to invest in its

International Uranium Enrichment Center (IUEC) at Angarsk in east Siberia, according to press reporting. IUEC suggested the investment would take the place of payments for assured low-enriched uranium fuel for Russian-built reactors in India supplied under established bilateral agreements. While the Russians have also proposed IUEC as part of the IAEA-safeguarded Reliable Access to Nuclear Fuel (RANF) program, which provides assured nuclear fuel and limits proliferation of enrichment technology (reftel), it appears their offer to India may fall outside the scope of RANF. The Indian delegation's response to this proposal is not yet known. Although India is shopping for international fuel sources to alleviate shortages (most reactors operate at an estimated 50% of capacity due to fuel shortages) it also has a strong focus on nuclear self-reliance and a voracious appetite for nuclear technology, both of which would conflict with investment in a fuel facility that will not provide access to enrichment or fabrication technology.

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TECHNOLOGY  
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BrahMos Missile to Become Hypersonic

17. (U) Media reports BrahMos Aerospace, an Indo-Russian joint venture, plans to develop a hypersonic version of the BrahMos missile, according to the company's CEO Dr. A. Sivathanu Pillai. Using a combination of atmospheric air dissolved in aviation kerosene, the missile is projected to reach speeds between Mach 5 and 7, in contrast to the current supersonic version in use by the Indian army which has a speed of Mach 2.8. Dr. Pillai said the components are undergoing laboratory tests and he expects the full prototype to be ready for flight testing by 2010.

Treating Brain Tumors with a Nanoparticle-Based Drug Delivery System

18. (U) A team from the Indian National Chemical Laboratory located in Pune reported in "Chemistry; European Journal" that a medication delivered by gellan gum-stabilized gold nanoparticles was effective against brain tumors in preliminary in-vitro tests. Gellan gum reduced gold nanoparticles are reported to have superior stability to electrolyte additions and pH changes as compared to traditional citrate and borohydride reduced nanoparticles. The antibiotic-loaded particles exhibited enhanced cytotoxic effects against the human glioma (brain tumor) cell lines LN-18 and LN-229 as compared to the same concentrations of pure antibiotic. In addition, the compound also demonstrated a longer period of effectiveness and enhanced ability to cross the blood brain barrier - a major problem faced by cancer drugs.

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